



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

Date: May 17, 2006

Subject: May 1, 2006 Western Snowpack Conditions and Water Supply Forecasts

The following information is provided for your use in describing western climate and water supply conditions as of May 1, 2006.

OVERVIEW

Record low snowpacks continue in the Southwest, while snowpacks were above, to well above average in California, Oregon, southern Washington, southern and central Idaho, western Wyoming, northern Utah and northwestern Colorado.

Seasonal precipitation is extremely low in the Southwest and well above average in most Pacific Northwest basins in response to a series of warm, sub-tropical storms that have moved through the region starting in September and October of 2005.

Extremely low seasonal streamflow is forecast for most basins in Arizona and New Mexico as a result of record low snowpacks and lack of precipitation. Because of the extremely dry April in the Rockies, streamflow forecasts are now near to below average in northern Colorado, eastern Utah, southern and western Wyoming and western Montana. Streamflow forecasts are still above average in Nevada, southern Idaho, the Sierras of California, most of Oregon, and southwestern Washington. Near, to slightly below average streamflow is forecast for parts of British Columbia, southern Utah, southwestern Colorado and Alaska.

As of May 1, reservoir storages for all western states are at or slightly below seasonal averages with the exception of California and Nevada which are slightly above historical averages. Arizona and New Mexico reservoir storage is benefiting from above average runoff from last year's abundant snowpack.

SNOWPACK

The westwide May 1, 2006 snowpack map reflects extremely low (less than 50% of average snowpacks) in Arizona, New Mexico, parts of southern Colorado, and southwestern Utah (Fig. 2). The scarcity of winter storms in the Southwest is the primary reason for the extremely low snowpacks. Many basins in New Mexico and Arizona are now snow-free.

A series of strong winter storms has boosted snowpacks to above, or well above average (111% to over 150%) in central Oregon, the southern Cascades of Washington, southern Idaho, a portion of southwest Montana, western and southern Wyoming, northern Utah, northern Colorado and the central Sierras of California. In Alaska, snowpacks are below average except for central regions.

A map containing a daily update of the westwide snowpack may be obtained from the following URL - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/snow.htm>

MONTHLY AND SEASONAL PRECIPITATION

April precipitation was extremely low, less than 50% of average, in central New Mexico, parts of southern Arizona, western Washington and British Columbia (Fig. 3). A large area of much above average precipitation was reported in California, Nevada, Utah, eastern Oregon, southern Idaho, western Colorado, southern Wyoming and parts of eastern Arizona. The rest of the West reported near or slightly below March precipitation. Alaska precipitation varied with most areas reporting near or slight below totals with above average amounts reported in the far north and a small part of the southwestern Alaska.

Seasonal precipitation for the period October 1, 2005 to April 30, 2006 reflects a continuing pattern of extremely dry conditions in the Southwest and very wet conditions in the Pacific Northwest (Fig. 4). The seasonal pattern is near to slightly below normal in southern California, southern Nevada, central Utah and western parts of Colorado and Wyoming. Alaska seasonal precipitation is near to slightly below average.

SPRING AND SUMMER STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

Extremely low seasonal streamflow is forecast for most basins in Arizona and New Mexico as a result of record low snowpacks and lack of precipitation (Fig. 5). Because of the extremely dry April in the Rockies, streamflow forecasts are now near to below average in northern Colorado, eastern Utah, southern and western Wyoming and western Montana. Streamflow forecasts are still above average in Nevada, southern Idaho, the Sierras of California, most of Oregon, and southwestern Washington. Near, to slightly below average streamflow is forecast for parts of British Columbia, southern Utah, southwestern Colorado and Alaska. Specific state streamflow summaries can be obtained from the Internet location - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cqibin/bor.pl>

RESERVOIR STORAGE

As of May 1, reservoir storages for all western states are at or slightly below seasonal averages with the exception of California and Nevada which are slightly above historical averages. Arizona and New Mexico reservoir storage is benefiting from above average runoff from last year's abundant snowpack (Fig. 6).

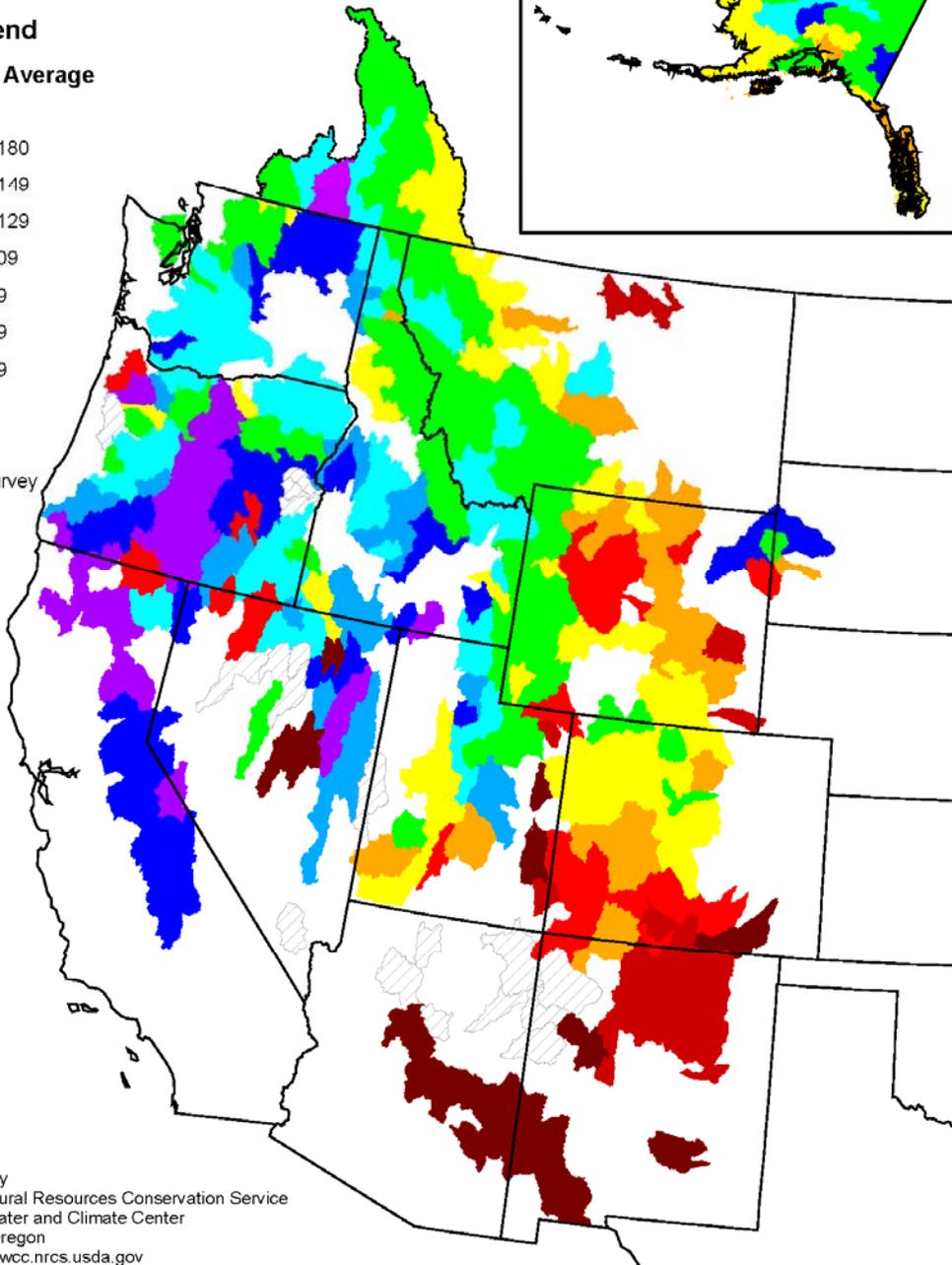
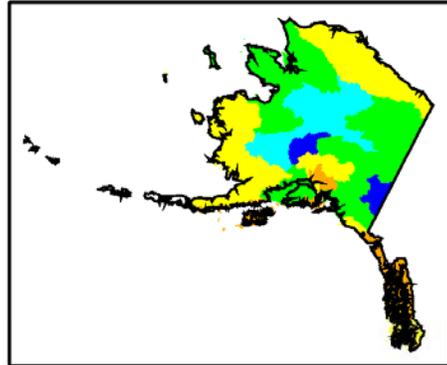
FOR MORE INFORMATION

The National Water and Climate Center Homepage provides the latest available snowpack and water supply information. Please visit us at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

/s/ DAVID THACKERAY

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Mountain Snowpack as of May 1, 2006



Prepared by
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

Figure 2. Mountain Snowpack, May 1, 2006

Monthly Precipitation for April 2006

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)

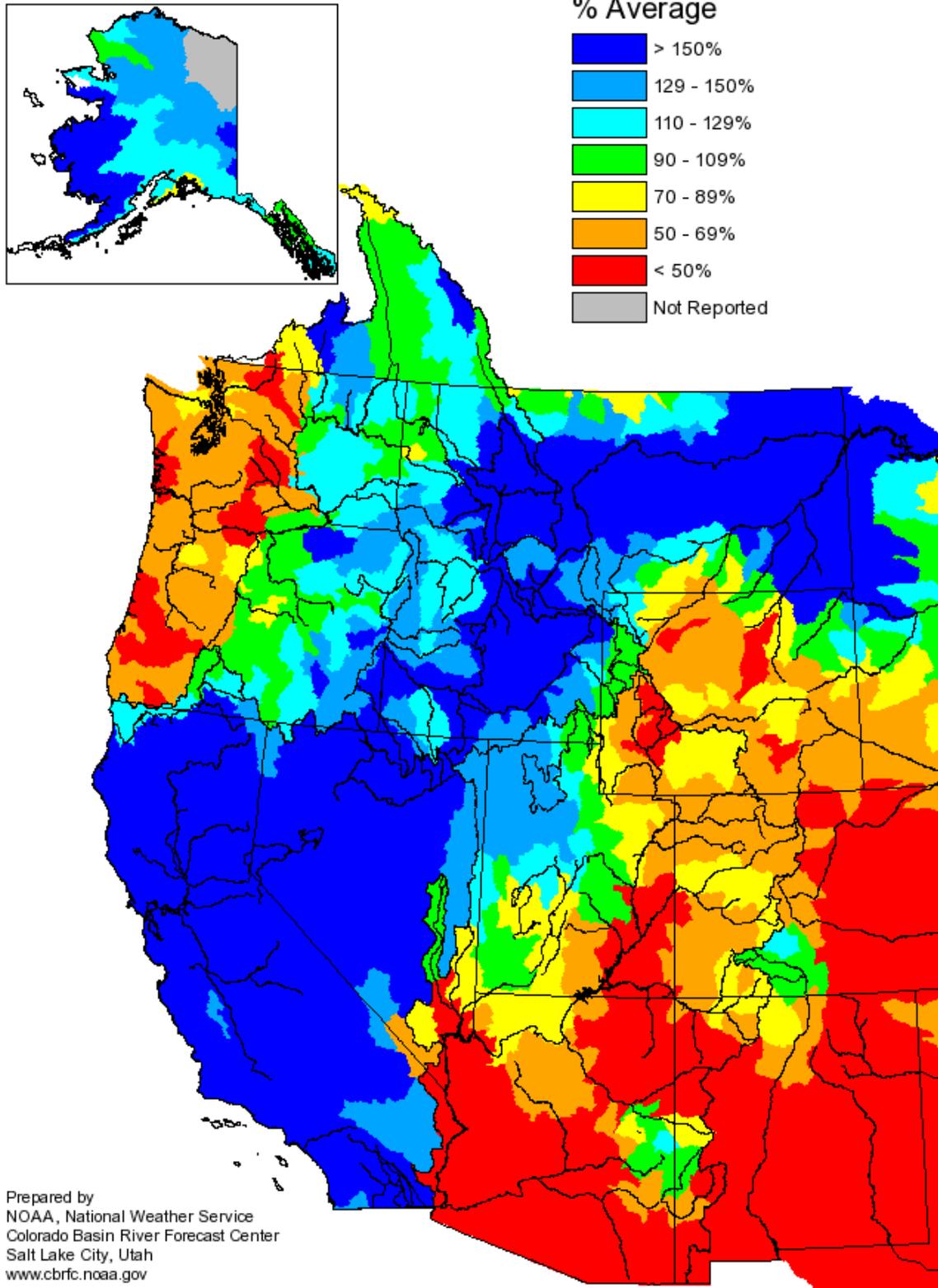


Figure 3. April 2006 Precipitation

Seasonal Precipitation, October 2005 - April 2006

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)

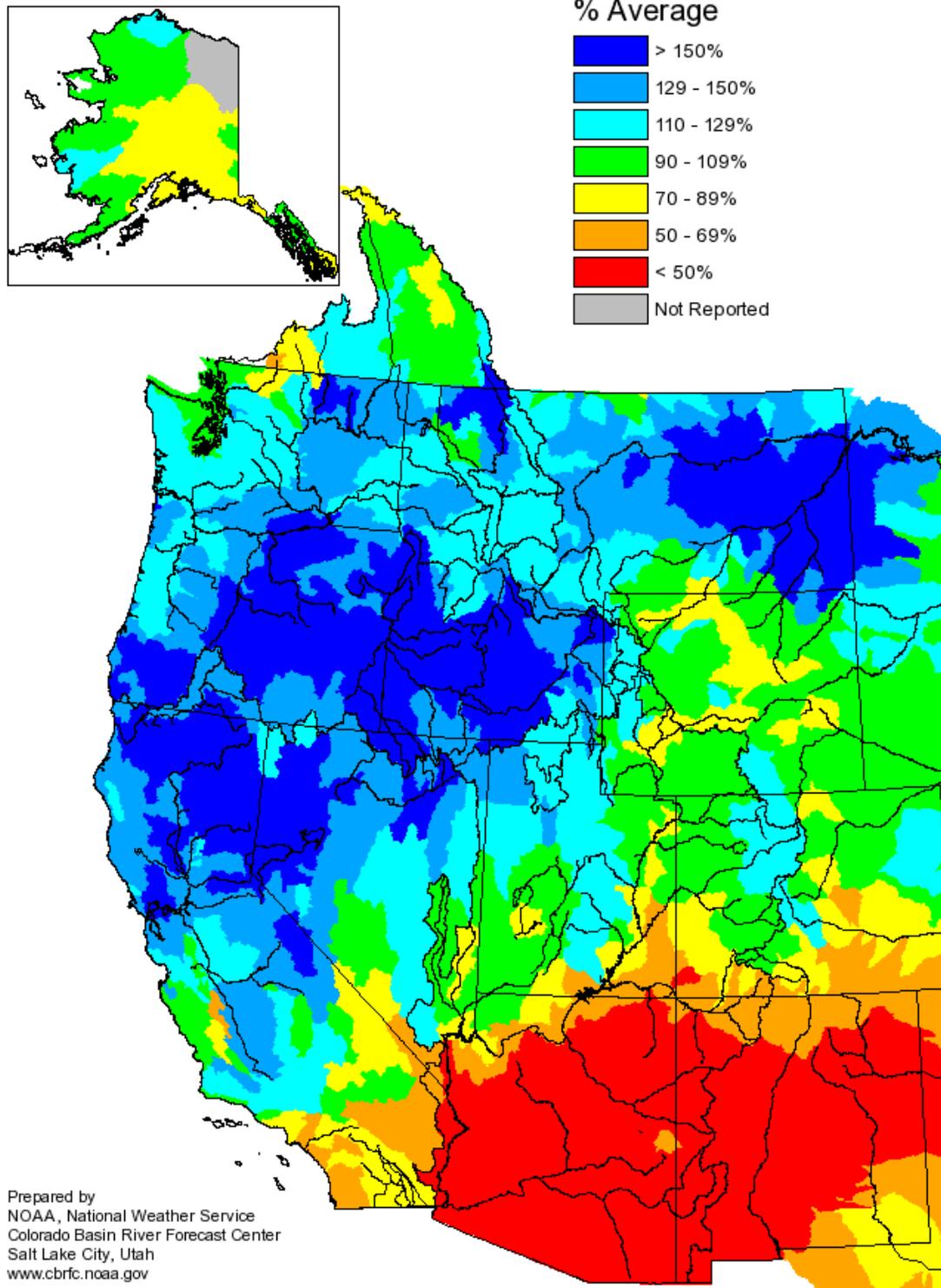


Figure 4. Seasonal Precipitation, October 1, 2005 to April 30, 2006

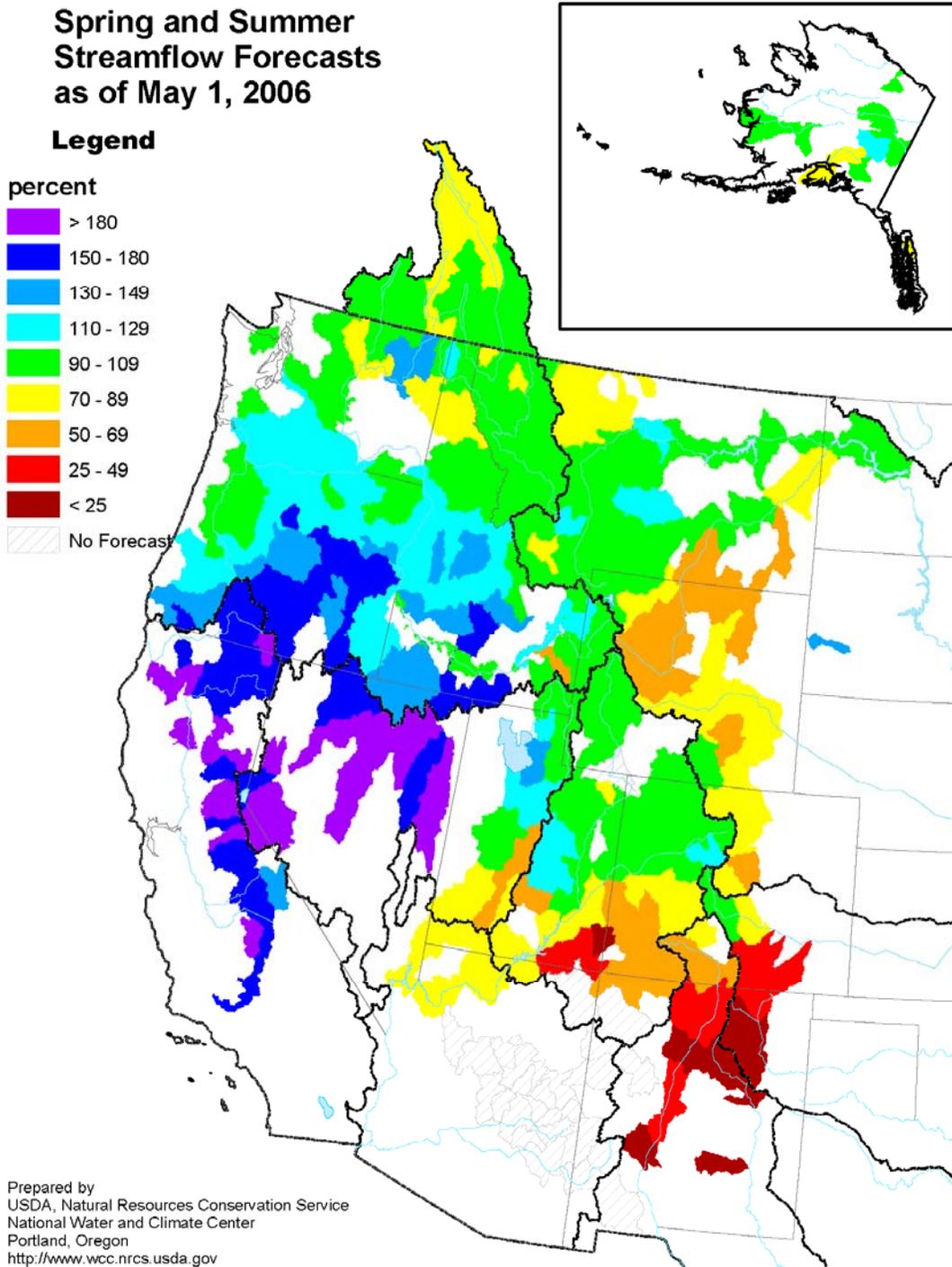
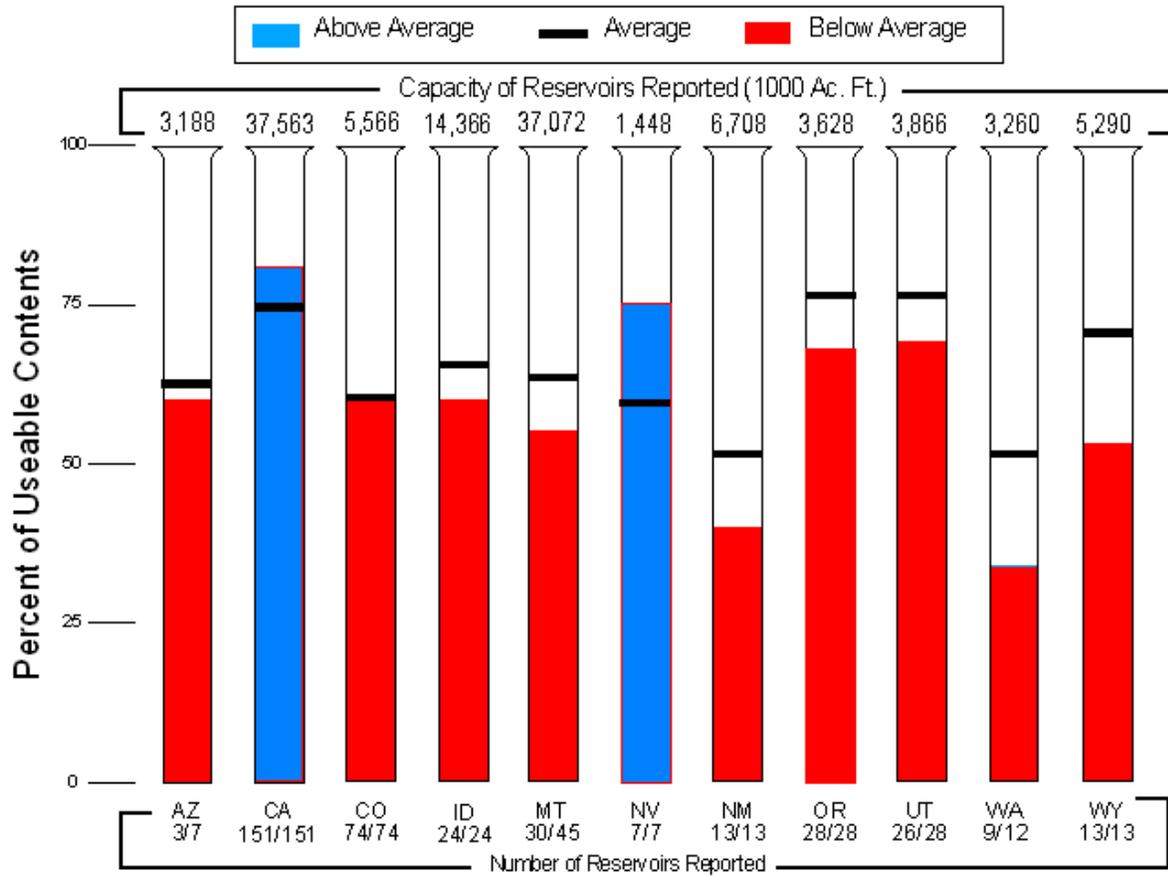


Figure 5. Seasonal Water Supply Forecasts - May 1, 2006

Reservoir Storage as of April 1, 2006



Prepared by: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Water and Climate Center, Portland, OR
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

Fig. 6. Reservoir Storage - May 1, 2006